

# Otago Exercise Program (OEP)

**Program Goal:** The original OEP demonstrated the greatest effectiveness with adults age 80 and older. For the US dissemination, the program was shown to be effective in adults age 65 and older. The program is not appropriate for older adults who screen at low risk for falls or who have the strength and endurance to participate in a community-based Tai Chi class.



*"We felt weak before we started Otago and now we feel stronger. Ray's balance is much better and he feels more confident driving and going up and down stairs. He is already starting to use the weights!"*

**Program Format:** Conducted over five sessions over eight weeks with a provider. Otago classes consist of:

1. A series of warm-up exercises
2. A walking program for up to 30 minutes three times a week
3. Select exercises from the 17 Otago exercises which challenges the participant's strength and balance, for up to 30 minutes three times a week

**Program Development:** The Otago Exercise Program was developed and tested by Dr. John Campbell and Dr. Clare Robertson at the University of Otago, Otago, New Zealand. Implementation and dissemination of the program in New Zealand was studied in the mid-late 1990s, and proven to decrease falls and fall-related injuries in high-risk older adults by 46% (Robertson, Devil, Gardner, & Campbell, 2001).

**Program Results:** Studies found participants had a decreased fear of falling by:

- Improvements in functional outcome measures\*
- Improvements in perception of ability to sit, stand, kneel, walk\*
- Improvements in balance confidence and fear of falling\*

**Program Alignment:** Results Washington Goal 4: Healthy & Safe Communities, Supported People, Quality of Life 3.2 to "Increase the percentage of long-term service and support clients served in home and community-based settings". Healthcare Authority's Common Measures, #59- Falls With Injury and #55- Potentially Avoidable Use of Emergency Department.

*Find out more: <http://www.med.unc.edu/aging/cgec/exercise-program>*

*Key Words: fall prevention, strength, balance, physical activity*

